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ABSTRACT

The State Plan for Alabama Higher Education is intended to focus public attention on important strategic issues facing Alabama higher education and the state and to articulate Alabama's needs and its vision for higher education. It is designed to commit resources necessary to provide high quality teaching, scholarship, research, and public service programs for Alabama citizens, and to promote stronger working relationships among stakeholders with an interest in the establishment of common goals and the resolution of issues related to the improvement of higher education in Alabama. The Plan outlines five goals for the period from 2003-2004 to 2008-2009: (1) access: elevate the educational attainment levels of all citizens; (2) cooperation: offer relevant educational programs that address economic, intellectual, and social problems by partnerships with business, government, K-12, and private sector entities; (3) quality: strengthen instructional programs, evaluate and assess their effectiveness, and use the results to improve quality; (4) resources: strive for a sustained level of funding that will allow citizens to reach educational objectives, attain cultural and social goals, and position Alabama to compete economically in the region; and (5) workforce development: enhance economic prosperity by involving all segments of public education in Alabama's economic future. (Contains 28 references.) (SLD)

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State Plan for Alabama Higher Education

2003-04 to 2008-09

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Preface

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education shall be responsible for statewide long-range planning for postsecondary education in Alabama. Such planning shall be the result of continuous study, analysis and evaluation. Plans will include the establishment of statewide objectives and priorities with methods and guidelines for achieving them. Ala. Code §16-5-6 (1975)

Recognizing that no single agency, institution, governing board, or other entity has the power or authority to resolve the complex issues facing the state, the first step in constructing a state plan for higher education was to establish cooperative working relationships among institutions, sectors, and groups that have different goals and mandates. To this end, members of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) Planning Liaison Group (PLG) were called together in February 2002 to begin the task of creating a framework for the State Plan for Alabama Higher Education 2003-04 to 2008-09. Membership in the PLG includes institutional representatives appointed by the presidents of the four-year public institutions and the Chancellor of the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education. In the interest of providing a broad perspective for establishing statewide objectives and priorities, the PLG invited a number of prominent representatives from the business and education community to present their views on the needs and challenges of higher education in Alabama. In the context of this document, higher education includes all public two-year

colleges and four-year universities in Alabama and the myriad of services they provide in teaching, scholarship, research, and public service.

Once adopted, the challenge for Alabama's higher education institutions, their boards of trustees, and state government will be to support the implementation of the State Plan for Alabama Higher Education 2003-04 to 2008-09 within the context of institutional missions and available financial resources. By the end of the five-year period, institutions should be able to measure the degree to which progress has been made toward identified goals and objectives.

Vision for Alabama Higher Education

Alabama's higher education system of colleges and universities will provide reasonable access to citizens of the state using a variety of delivery systems, to prepare an educated citizenry and a competitive work force for the present and the future. Focusing on accomplishments, public higher education institutions will exhibit accountability and high performance in teaching, scholarship, research, and public service, in addition to responding effectively to the needs of students and society through wise stewardship of its public resources. Using cooperative planning, Alabama's institutions of higher education will recognize the unique contributions of all sectors, public and private, including two-year and four-year institutions, K-12, government, business and industry, and the general public, toward the accomplishment of state goals. In the future, public institutions of higher education in Alabama will be acknowledged not only as vehicles for personal, social, and economic progress, but also nationally and internationally as models of education reform.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the State Plan for Alabama Higher Education 2003-04 to 2008-09 is fourfold:

1) To focus public attention on important strategic issues facing Alabama higher education and the state;

2) To articulate Alabama's needs and its vision for higher education;

3) To commit resources necessary to provide high quality teaching, scholarship, research, and public service programs for Alabama citizens; and

4) To promote stronger working relationships among stakeholders with an interest in the establishment of common goals and the resolution of issues related to the improvement of higher education in Alabama.

Description of Higher Education in Alabama

Throughout most of Alabama's history, higher education was provided largely by traditional, residential four-year institutions. Nevertheless, in recent decades, many urban campuses emerged, and an extensive system of two-year community, junior, and technical colleges developed throughout the state.

Institutions of higher education in Alabama, like those in other states, serve four primary functions: Teaching, scholarship, research, and public service. Two institutions have additional mission elements inherent to their academic health centers. While academic excellence in teaching and scholarship is the cornerstone of all institutions of higher education, research and public service are of equal importance because of their close links to economic development and the expansion of knowledge.

Governance

Alabama's higher education resources include diverse institutions, public and private, spread geographically throughout the state: 15 public universities, 1 public upper-division university, 21 public community colleges, 5 public technical colleges, 15 private universities and colleges, 1 private junior college, and more than 200 proprietary institutions. In addition to the autonomous boards of trustees that govern public universities, some of which include multi-campus systems, the State Board of Education governs the public two-year colleges and

one upper-division university. The ACHE is the state-level coordinating agency for public higher education with regulatory and advisory authority in specified areas. Independent boards of trustees govern private institutions.

Programmatic Diversity

Alabama's higher education institutions offer degrees ranging from certificates to doctorates to first professional degrees. Program offerings for public institutions are consistent with instructional role statements approved by the ACHE.[1] Although enrollment in higher education in Alabama is predominantly public, private institutions that include traditional two-year and four-year colleges, many of which are church-related, as well as proprietary institutions offering specialized programs of postsecondary teaching, play a significant role.

Economic Benefits

Alabama's institutions of higher education enhance social, economic, and political benefits that involve most of the people of the state. In addition to providing a broad range of educational opportunities that improve the quality of life for Alabama citizens, the state's public colleges and universities are a catalyst for economic growth. Economic benefits of higher education are measurable. That is, institutions generate money external to taxpayer funds for research and development (R & D); they provide a return on investment of state funds for R & D that spawns high technology companies and jobs securing a tax base for

[1] A profile of these institutions as well as the Statistical Abstract: Higher Education in Alabama is available on the ACHE web site at www.ache.state.al.us.

government and other services; they prepare a highly qualified workforce that attracts business and industry; and they are of direct economic benefit to their local communities.

From a national perspective, states vary significantly in the size of their economies owing to differences in population, land area, infrastructure, national resources, and history. While these variables result in R & D expenditures being concentrated in relatively few states, Alabama colleges and universities were successful in attracting more than $430 million in R & D funding during FY 2001.[2] Federal government expenditures accounted for nearly three fourths of these funds with the remainder generated through contributions of state and local governments, industry, and the institutions themselves.

Leveraging of state resources and demonstrating a high rate of return on the investment of state funds is another aspect of the economic benefit provided by higher education institutions. This is achieved through the establishment of partnerships that elevate the quality of Alabama's academic and industrial research base for the State's science and technology enterprises which, in turn, lead to the establishment of spin-off, high technology companies and jobs. In the October 2002 report of the Alabama EPSCoR (Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research) program, it was noted that EPSCoR institutions

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[2]National Science Foundation. (2003, April). Survey of Research and Development Expenditures at Universities and Colleges: Fiscal Year 2001. Arlington, VA: Author.

have generated $113.8 million in external funding for research since 1986.[3] That $113.8 million represents a 5.5 to 1 return on the $20.5 million invested in higher education research through state appropriations. In other words, every $1 tax payers invested in Alabama's research institutions during this period yielded $5.50 in external funds. The report also noted that during FY 2002 Alabama's EPSCoR faculty and scientists attracted $11.2 million in federal funds that supported projects totaling $15.3 million.

Preparation of a qualified workforce is essential to attracting businesses and industry, and graduate and professional degrees are prerequisites to the highest paying jobs. Retention of those who have earned such degrees is important to Alabama's economic health. A study released in 2001 by the Alabama Council of Gradate Deans reveals that of the more than 25,000 students enrolled in advanced degree programs in Alabama's public institutions, 4 out of 5 graduates remained in Alabama.

Not only do the high quality programs offered by public colleges and universities in Alabama increase the marketability of our work force, emerging industries and growing businesses depend upon these institutions for employee training. Two-year higher education institutions provide the technical education, customized training, and adult education programs that utilize the best available technology in their instructional delivery systems. Alabama's two-year

[3] The Alabama EPSCoR program is a consortium of seven Ph.D. granting institutions (The University of Alabama, Alabama A&M University, Auburn University, Tuskegee University, University of Alabama in Huntsville, University of Alabama in Birmingham, and University of South Alabama), 12 universities and two-year colleges as well as 97 industry, government, and Federal Laboratory partners.

institutions serve an estimated 145,000 students and provide more than 2,000 Alabama companies with specialized training programs. Graduates of these institutions may expect to earn 24% more in the workplace than their counterparts with a high school diploma.

Finally, higher education institutions are a direct benefit to the towns and cities they serve. Economic impact studies conducted by many institutions document their importance to the communities where they are located. In some geographical areas, a college is the dominant employer and consumer. Overall, public higher education institutions in Alabama employ over 42,000 full-time employees[4] and expend almost $3.8 billion annually[5].

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[4] Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). (2001) [Fall Staff Survey]. Unpublished raw data.
[5] Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). (2001) [Finance FY 2001]. Unpublished raw data.

Planning Assumptions

Public Perceptions

1. According to a survey taken in 2002 by the *American Council of Education News*, the majority of Alabamians will continue to regard a college education as the key to the *good life* and thus, support career preparation and enhancement programs.

2. A sustained, cooperative effort by all sectors and levels of public education will be needed to ensure that Alabamians perceive learning as a life-long continuum and understand the benefits to the state of high-quality programs from pre-kindergarten through advanced graduate study.

3. Renewed and expanded efforts will be needed to ensure that the public and the state's decision makers understand the importance of higher education as an *economic engine* in Alabama.

4. In the absence of adequate state fiscal support, tuition and fees will increase if Alabama is to maintain higher education programs and services.

5. The people of Alabama will expect their public higher education institutions to demonstrate and provide evidence of accountability in their use of public tax resources.

Educational

1. Education of Alabama's citizens to their maximum potential will result in increased work opportunities, enhanced investment opportunities, and improved quality of life.

2. Technological advancements will continue to influence the level of skills required in the majority of jobs.

3. Employers will expect graduates of Alabama colleges and universities to successfully apply communication, reading, problem-solving, and information management skills in the workplace.

4. Distance learning technologies will continue to develop and become more affordable, opening new opportunities for access to programs, sharing instructional resources among institutions, and reaching underserved areas of the state.

5. The number of college students who are employed will continue to grow, increasing the need to provide alternatives to traditional class scheduling.

6. Increasing tuition and fees will focus public attention on need-based financial aid programs for students from low-income families.

7. Higher education programs will be expected to respond to an increasingly diverse student population that includes more minority students, immigrants, working adults, and senior citizens.

8. Alabama's literacy rate will need to be improved as an integral part of the basic investment in public education if the full potential of its citizens and its economy is to be realized.

9. Assessment of student preparation, development of clear program goals, and appraisal of student learning outcomes will have to be expanded to ensure that graduates have the knowledge, skills, and values needed for success.

10. Alabama's growing population of older citizens will require significant numbers of trained health care professionals and service workers.

Social and Demographic[6]

1. As a result of a stable birth-rate over the last two decades, Alabama's population in the traditional college-going ages will decrease, as will the number of high school graduates and high school general equivalency degree (GED) completions.

2. The population of Alabama will increase by a projected 8% over the next decade.

3. The largest population cohort in the history of the United States will reach retirement by the end of the first decade of the 21st Century.[7]

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[6] Marks, J.L. (2003, June). SREB Fact Book on Higher Education, Alabama Featured Facts. Atlanta, GA: SREB.

[7] University of South Alabama Long-Range Planning Committee. (2001, April). Visions: Strategies for realizing shared visions of the University of South Alabama 2000-01 through 2005-06. Mobile, AL: Author; see also Marks, J.L. (2001, June). SREB Fact Book on Higher Education, Alabama Featured Facts. Atlanta, GA: SREB.

4. The population of Alabamians aged 65 or older will increase at a greater rate than the general population and by 2025 will account for 21% of the state's residents.

5. The number and percentage of females enrolling in higher education programs will continue to increase while the percentage of males entering postsecondary education will continue to decrease.

Economics

1. Alabama's economy will continue its shift from agricultural, agriculture-related, and capital goods industries toward service industries and consumer goods manufacturing.

2. A substantial investment of state and institutional resources will be required to respond to student demands for technology-oriented and laboratory-oriented professional programs.

3. Opportunities for partnerships with business and industry in technology transfer, product development, and workforce skills development will increase.

4. Investment by the State of Alabama in its institutions of higher education will need to be increased in order to leverage a multiple dollar return from Federal resources, private contracts, grants, and private gift sources.

5. Opportunities to secure Federal direct appropriations for specific programs or projects will continue to remain strong.

6. Applied research, technology transfer, and workforce development programs will be needed as a basis to sustain Alabama's long-range economic development.

Goals with Objectives for 2003-04 to 2008-09

Goal 1 – Access

Elevate the educational attainment levels of all citizens.

Objectives

1. Work with all sectors of education in Alabama to ensure that students receive a sound educational foundation so as to progress through the educational system successfully.

2. Increase the number of high school students enrolled in dual and accelerated enrollment courses.

3. Increase higher education access to all areas of Alabama through distance learning, focusing particularly on underserved areas.

4. Increase the number and amount of state scholarships and grants provided to students attending colleges and universities, especially students from low income families.

5. Strengthen the articulation process and the transferability of educational achievements.

6. Offer effective adult education, GED, and literacy programs to allow citizens the opportunity to access progressively higher levels of education and training.

7. Improve the recruitment, retention, and persistence to graduation for all levels of education.

8. Increase the percentage of citizens who complete associate's and bachelor's degrees.

Goal 2 -- Cooperation

Offer relevant educational programs that address economic, intellectual, and social problems by partnering with business, government, K-12, and private sector entities.

Objectives

1. Respond to the educational needs of an increasingly diverse population that includes more minorities, immigrants, working adults, and senior citizens.

2. Align with business and industry in Alabama to identify their needs for a trained workforce of prepared citizens who are able to move into jobs and perform them with a high level of success.

3. Increase the number of well-prepared teachers and develop incentives to meet the demands of critical subject mastery shortages particularly in underserved areas of the state.

4. Strengthen health care training programs and develop incentives to meet the shortage of health care workers in Alabama.

5. Provide support for the many activities that enhance the quality of life for Alabama citizens such as health and safety, recreation and the arts, and opportunities for lifelong learning.

6. Develop partnerships among K-12, higher education, business, and government to address the issues of accessibility, affordability, and educational attainment of Alabama's citizens in innovative ways.

7. Enhance the quality of life and culture of all Alabamians through a renewed commitment to the arts and humanities.

Goal 3 -- Quality

Strengthen instructional programs, evaluate and assess their effectiveness, and use the results to improve quality.

Objectives

1. Develop a process of accountability that recognizes the needs of all stakeholders in light of Alabama's finite resources.

2. Provide equipment, information resources, appropriate and adequate facilities, and other support for quality teaching and research to enhance student learning including increasing the instructional use of technology.

3. Provide funding for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty, in order to significantly improve representation by race, ethnicity, and gender.

4. Provide faculty development opportunities to strengthen instructional skills.

5. Encourage incentives for using assessment results to strengthen programs.

6. Provide a uniform reporting process denoting the success of students in all sectors of higher education transferring to Alabama's universities from Alabama's public two-year colleges (grade point average (GPA), course grades, continuation rate, etc).

7. Use technology to enhance the delivery of higher education programs.

Goal 4 -- Resources

Strive for a sustained level of funding that will allow citizens to reach educational objectives, attain cultural and social goals, and position Alabama to compete economically in the region.

Objectives

1. Collaborate with Alabama citizens and interest groups to improve state funding for education including efforts toward tax reform.

2. Communicate and promote the value, strengths, effectiveness, and needs of higher education to the general public.

3. Communicate and promote the value, strengths, effectiveness, and needs of higher education to the legislative and executive branches of Alabama's state government.

4. Increase efficiency through the allocation, reallocation, and utilization of resources to maximize the state's investment in higher education.

5. Facilitate collaboration among K-12, higher education, business, and government to improve efficiencies and expand opportunities.

Goal 5 – Workforce Development

Enhance economic prosperity by involving all segments of public education in Alabama's economic future.

Objectives

1. Increase the involvement of education in the development of a world-classed, technologically skilled workforce.

2. Provide students with pre-employment assessments and technical career programs that lead directly to employment.

3. Increase support for research activities that attract business and industry to Alabama.

4. Provide additional information about pre-employment education and training opportunities to employers, unemployed, and under-employed potential employees.

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Montgomery, AL 36124-4023

Alabama Higher Education Institutions*

Public Universities

Alabama A&M University
Auburn University
Jacksonville State University
Troy State University Dothan
The University of Alabama
University of Alabama in Huntsville
University of North Alabama
University of West Alabama
Alabama State University
Auburn University at Montgomery
Troy State University
Troy State University Montgomery
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Montevallo
University of South Alabama

Public Upper Division University

Athens State University

Public Community Colleges – Two-Year Institutions

Alabama Southern Community College
Bishop State Community College
Central Alabama State Community College
Enterprise-Ozark Community College
Gadsden State Community College
Jefferson State Community College
L.B. Wallace Community College
Northwest-Shoals Community College
Snead State Community College
G. C. Wallace State Community College Dothan
G. C. Wallace State Community College Selma
Bevil State Community College
Calhoun State Community College
Chattahoochee Valley Community College
Faulkner State Community College
Jefferson Davis Community College
Lawson State Community College
Northeast Alabama Community College
Shelton State Community College
Southern Union State Community College
G. C. Wallace State Community College Hanceville

Public Technical Colleges – Two-Year Institutions

Bessemer State Technical College
Ingram State Technical College
Trenholm State Technical College
Drake State Technical College
Reid State Technical College

Private Four-Year Colleges

Birmingham Southern College
Faulkner University
Judson College
Oakwood College
Selma University
Spring Hill College
Talladega College
University of Mobile
Concordia College
Huntingdon College
Miles College
Samford University
Southeastern Bible College
Stillman College
Tuskegee University

Private Two-Year College

Marion Military Institute

*Does not include private, proprietary institutions licensed to operate in Alabama.

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ALABAMA
MISSISSIPPI
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FLORIDA
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